

THE BOARD REPORTS

Highlights of the White Plains Board of Education Meeting

November 5, 2007

MOMENT OF SILENCE: Superintendent of Schools **Timothy Connors** asked for a moment of silence in memory of **Robert Jackson**, a Science teacher in the district for 25 years before his retirement in 1982.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Presenting enrollment figures as of October 1st, Mr. Connors said they are very much on target, with no significant differences from projections. Total enrollment is 7,038, compared with 7,000 last year. The High School figure has increased slightly, while the other school counts have decreased a bit.

Mr. Connors asked Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Services **Anne Lillis** for reports on two matters. She said that after efforts to improve accuracy in reporting student disciplinary incidents, the State has responded that the district is now in compliance. Secondly, Dr. Lillis will be sending the Board a plan for 504 Accommodation (students with specific disabilities who are not classified for Special Education) and this is to be approved December 10th.

Mr. Connors informed the Board that the full-day Prekindergarten class, funded by the State Contract for Excellence is expected to begin in December.

An invitation was extended for everyone to celebrate the new Highlands Field at the Thanksgiving Day Football Game on November 22nd at 10 A.M.

TREE PLANTING ON HIGH SCHOOL PROPERTY: Landscaper **Ron Eberlin** spoke about the proposal to replace trees with fast-growing evergreens on the High School property adjacent to the Havilands Lane neighborhood. He said the weather has been warm enough to extend the planting season well into December. Mr. Connors and Mr. Seiler had met with the neighbors in the area last Saturday to review the plan and Mr. Connors complimented the Board for its efforts to meet everyone's concerns.

The Board adopted a resolution on environmental findings, working with the City and completing the full disclosure form. The Board becomes the lead agency and makes a negative declaration for compliance with the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). The district will get quotes for planting and hopes to complete the entire process within the next few weeks.

PERSONNEL: Two teachers were awarded tenure by the Board: **Akiva Friedman**, Science Teacher at the High School, and **Jenifer Berenberg**, English & ESOL Teacher at the Community School. Presenting Mr. Friedman, Science Coordinator **Margaret Doty** described him as enthusiastic, innovative, engaging, and a leader among teachers. **Gary Peluso**, Director of Supplemental Programs, called Ms. Berenberg a tireless worker with high expectations, who has a keen insight into reaching students.

The Board appointed three Probationary teachers: **Miriam Pena** as Chairperson of the Committee on Special Education at the High School; **Tatyana Alekhanova**, ESOL Teacher at Ridgeway School; and **Marie Negri**, ESOL Teacher at the Highlands Middle School.

BOARD MEMBERS: **Donna McLaughlin**, President; **Terry McGuire**, Vice President; **Peter Bassano**; **Sheryl Brady**, **Rosemarie Eller**; **Charlie Norris**, **William Pollak**

POLICY ON SEX OFFENDER NOTIFICATION: The Board adopted a revised policy on this subject, and accompanying rules will clarify the location of school bus stops in relation to homes of registered sex offenders.

AUDIT: The Board accepted the Independent Auditors' Report for the 2006-07 school year by **Bennett Kielson Storch DeSantis Division of O'Connor Davies Munns & Dobbins, LLP**. Auditor **Margaret Modugno** said the district is in excellent financial condition.

DONATIONS: The Board and Mr. Connors thanked the following donors for their generosity: **Deirdre Washington** for a scanner for Eastview Middle School, **PRO Sports Therapy of Westchester** for physical therapy machines for the High School Athletic Department, **Mrs. Deborah Van Glahn** for a trumpet for the Music program, **Brunschwig & Fils** for fabric for Art classes at Post Road School, and **Helene Alalouf** for a drafting table and easel for the High School.

BOARD ACTIVITY: Board President **Donna McLaughlin** was presented with a Developmental Achievement Citation from the New York State School Boards Association, for "participation in activities to improve governance knowledge and skills."

Board Vice President **Terry McGuire** was a facilitator at the recent Youth Business Skills Olympics sponsored by the African American Men of Westchester Inc. and Purchase College. The White Plains team took first place in the event, which had a theme of Internet Ethics.

Board members **Sheryl Brady** and **Charlie Norris** participated in the New York State School Boards Association Annual Convention in New York City last week. Both attended the full-day School Law Seminar and Mrs. Brady also sat in on the business portion of the convention. They agreed that it was a very worthwhile, enlightening experience.

Other members reported on the various Board Committees which have met in the last few weeks -- Finance, Curriculum and Safety.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL: **Shelley Wepner**, Dean and Professor at Manhattanville College described this partnership with George Washington School. The goals are for teachers in the classroom to be current with theory, while the college faculty understands the realities of the classroom. It also involves a year-long internship and a student teaching program. As a result, our students benefit from this alliance.

PUBLIC COMMENT: **Cary Kyzivat**, President of the Concerned Citizens for Open Space, questioned the timing of the tree planting and asked for a commitment that it will occur during the current planting season.

Parent **Marjorie Madfis** expressed concern about priorities for staff appointments in relation to teacher leaves, noting the number of changes in her child's classroom at Post Road School.

UPCOMING MEETINGS: November 29: Special Meeting, Education House, 7:30 P.M.
December 10: Regular Meeting, High School, B-1 Room, 7:30 P.M.
Recognition of Scholar-Athletes

Editor: Michele Schoenfeld